

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. - 10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A substrate processing apparatus performing a predetermined process to a substrate, comprising:

a process tank to store a predetermined processing liquid;

a holding element to hold a substrate in said process tank;

a processing liquid supply element to supply a heated processing liquid to said process tank;

a process chamber to perform drying of a substrate, said process chamber being disposed above said process tank;

an inert gas supply element to supply an inert gas into said process chamber by discharging said inert gas from a purge element;

a displacement element to displace a substrate held by said holding element from a first position at which a substrate is immersed in a processing liquid to a second position at which the substrate is not immersed in the processing liquid, under condition that said inert gas supply element supplies an inert gas into said process chamber after the temperature of the substrate is elevated by a processing liquid heated in said process tank; and

an exhaust element to exhaust the atmosphere of said process chamber via an exhaust port located in the vicinity of the liquid surface of said predetermined processing liquid stored in said process tank, under the condition that a substrate held by said holding element is displaced from said first position to said second position by said displacement element, wherein

said purge element comprises an upper purge element positioned above said process chamber and supplying said inert gas downwardly through first pipe means thereof, and a lower purge element positioned below said upper purge element and supplying discharging said inert gas through second pipe means thereof into ~~[[in]]~~ a direction substantially parallel to the liquid surface of said predetermined processing liquid stored in said process tank, said purge element being located above said exhaust port.

12. (Previously Presented) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said inert gas supply element includes an adjusting element to adjust the humidity of an inert gas supplied into said process chamber.

13. (Previously Presented) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said inert gas supply element includes an inert gas temperature control element to control an inert gas supplied into said process chamber so as to be in a heated state.

14. (Previously Presented) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said holding element holds a substrate such that the face of processing of the substrate is substantially parallel to a vertical direction in said process chamber.

15. - 24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 11 further comprising at least two of the exhaust elements, each exhaust element being positioned on one side of the process tank.

26. (Previously Presented) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the lower purge element discharges the inert gas toward the exhaust port.